

CobbsCreekReservoir

NEWS

A project to provide a long-term regional water supply to the citizens of Cumberland, Powhatan, Henrico and Goochland counties while protecting and sustaining the James River

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Partners of the Proposed Cobbs Creek Reservoir:

For additional information, please visit your county's web site and click on Cobbs Creek Reservoir Project or contact the individual listed below.

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A copy of the permit application for the establishment of the Cobbs Creek Reservoir is available for public review in each of the county offices at the addresses listed above.

Proposed Cobbs Creek Reservoir Introducing the Project

Water is life. Perhaps this was no better illustrated than during the drought of 2002 when wells throughout the region failed and James River flows reached record 100-year lows.

To prevent this situation from occurring again, Governor Warner and the Virginia General Assembly enacted legislation which requires the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to establish regulations requiring localities to develop plans for providing citizens with an adequate and clean water supply while protecting and enhancing the beneficial use of Virginia's water resources.

The governmental leaders of Cumberland, Powhatan and Henrico counties are taking their responsibility seriously to provide adequate water supplies for their citizens by developing the proposal for the Cobbs Creek Reservoir.

Located in northern Cumberland County, the proposed Cobbs Creek Reservoir is being designed to address the important issue of regional water supply planning highlighted

by the drought of 2002 while providing important ecological and recreational benefits to the James River. The reservoir would draw water from the James River when the levels are high and release millions of gallons in the James during droughts, ensuring a water supply to users down river and the sustained ecological health of the river and its inhabitants.

Goochland County also will benefit from the project since its future water needs will be met by Henrico County under their current water agreement.

"The proposed Cobbs Creek Reservoir Project is a creative and solution-oriented approach to meeting the regional water supply needs of our citizens while providing an innovative mechanism for protecting and sustaining the James during drought periods," said Sherry Swinson, Cumberland's assistant county administrator who is leading the regional effort. "This project is a model for regional cooperation to serve a greater need as opposed to serving a single community."

Benefits:

The proposed Cobbs Creek Reservoir will be a multi-purpose reservoir designed to provide the following primary benefits:

A reliable future water supply for Cumberland, Henrico, Goochland and Powhatan counties.

Reduced stress upon the James River during critical drought conditions.

Low flow augmentation of James River flows to benefit in-stream uses such as fisheries, recreation and water quality.

A recreation amenity to Cumberland County citizens and others who will visit the reservoir.

First Steps:



The first step in moving the project forward is to apply for a permit to develop the project. In April 2005, Cumberland County and its regional coalition submitted the required permit application for the establishment of the Cobbs Creek Reservoir in Cumberland County.

Cumberland County's Board of Supervisors endorsed the Cobbs Creek Reservoir Project and the political leadership of Powhatan and Henrico counties adopted resolutions in support of the project.

A permit application must be reviewed and approved by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Army Corps of Engineers and other state and federal agencies before the project can proceed. The review process is expected to take nine to 12 months.

A copy of the permit application is available for public review at the Cumberland County Public Library and the county offices in Cumberland, Powhatan and Henrico (see front page for a listing of addresses).

Proposed Cobbs Creek Reservoir

Fast Facts:

Location: Northwestern Cumberland County

Capacity: 14.8 billion gallons

Size: 1,100 acres

Cost: \$170 million

Completion Date: Once approved, a reservoir this size typically takes two years for design, two years to construct, and two years to fill.

Site Location:

More than 25 potential reservoir site locations in Cumberland County were evaluated based on the parameters of reservoir size, existing land uses, affected wetland area and degree of impact to residents. The Cobbs Creek site was chosen because it had minimal impacts in all of these areas. Prior to the selection of Cobbs Creek as the preferred reservoir site, Powhatan County reviewed fifteen sites and a site search was previously conducted by Goochland County. None of these sites provided the reservoir capacity with the minimal impacts of the Cobbs Creek option.

Buffer Zone:

Once the project receives approval, the development team will proceed to final design. It is at this stage that an appropriate buffer zone will be determined which not only includes the size of the buffer zone surrounding the reservoir, but restrictions and permitted uses for the property as well. These decisions will be made with input from the responsible regulatory agencies overseeing the project, consulting engineers, the Cumberland County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, the water authority and citizens. It's an important decision that needs thoughtful consideration. There will be opportunities for feedback throughout the design process.